

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGUI PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 178993

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, PINS, PINT, SU, ET

SUBJECT: WASHINGTON POST ARTICLE ON RESUMED CIVIL WAR IN
SUDAN

1. WASHINGTON POST, IN FRONT PAGE DISPATCH JULY 29 FROM
DAVID OTTAWAY AND TAMENE ASMARE IN ADDIS ABABA, SAID CIVIL
WAR HAD BROKEN OUT AGAIN IN SUDAN BETWEEN CENTRAL GOVERN-
MENT FORCES AND SECESSIONIST REBELS IN SOUTH. CORRESPON-
DENTS SAID REPORT ON RENEWED FIGHTING BASED ON INFORMATION
PROVIDED BY MORE THAN 10,000 REFUGEES CROSSING INTO
SOUTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA FROM SUDAN.

2. PRESS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN BUT
TOPIC NOT RAISED AT BRIEFING JULY 29. FOLLOWING IS
GUIDANCE:

Q. CAN YOU CONFIRM WASHINGTON POST REPORT THAT CIVIL WAR
HAS BROKEN OUT AGAIN IN SUDAN?

A. WE HAVE HAD NO REPORTS FROM OUR POSTS IN THE AREA THAT
WOULD CONFIRM THAT CIVIL WAR HAS RESUMED IN SUDAN.
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(END PRESS GUIDANCE)

3. POST ARTICLE SAID COLLAPSE OF 1972 ADDIS ABABA PEACE
ACCORD "COULD SERIOUSLY UNDERMINE NIMERI'S PRESTIGE AND

LEAD TO WIDESPREAD DISCONTENT WITH HIS MODERATE GOVERNMENT.

AT VERY LEAST, IT APPEARS THAT THE GENERAL, WHO CAME TO POWER IN A MILITARY COUP IN MAY 1969, HAS AN EXPLOSIVE POLITICAL SITUATION ON HIS HANDS IF THE REFUGEES' REPORTS ARE EVEN HALF-TRUE." THE POST ADDED:

"THE FIRST MAJOR CLASH SINCE THE TRUCE BETWEEN SOUTHERN SUDANESE DISSIDENTS AND KHARTOUM GOVERNMENT ARMY REPORTEDLY OCCURRED MARCH 3 IN AKOBO, SMALL TOWN ON THE SUDANESE-ETHIOPIAN BORDER ROUGHLY 700 MILES SOUTHEAST OF KHARTOUM. MORE THAN 200 CIVILIANS, NORTHERN SOLDIERS AND SOUTHERN ANYANYA REBELS WERE EITHER KILLED OR EXECUTED, ACCORDING TO REFUGEES. IN ADDITION, 150 ANYANYA TROOPS WERE DISARMED AND LATER EXECUTED, THEY SAID.

"FIGHTING IS STILL GOING ON, ACCORDING TO REFUGEE LEADERS, IN REGION AROUND TOWNS OF AKOBO AND MALAKAL, 175 MILES TO NORTHEAST, AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE TENSION BETWEEN SOUTHERN BLACK POPULATION - ANIMIST AND CHRISTIAN - AND NORTHERN ARABS THROUGH THREE SOUTHERN PROVINCES OF SUDAN.

"EXTENT AND SERIOUSNESS OF FIGHTING REMAINS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE AT THIS POINT. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REPORTS FROM SUDAN ON SITUATION IN SOUTH, AND SUDANESE GOVERNMENT HAS DENIED THAT ANY SOUTHERN REFUGEES HAVE FLED TO NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. NOR WAS THERE ANY WAY TO CONFIRM IMMEDIATELY REPORTS OF FIGHTING PROVIDED BY REFUGEES.

"BUT JUDGING FROM NUMBER OF SUDANESE WHO HAVE FLED INTO ETHIOPIA SINCE MARCH AND THEIR ACCOUNTS OF SITUATION, IT WOULD APPEAR THAT SUDAN HAS ONCE AGAIN PLUNGED INTO CIVIL WAR OR IS ON VERGE OF IT. REFUGEES FROM SOUTHERN SUDAN FIRST BEGAN CROSSING BORDER INTO ETHIOPIA IN MID-APRIL, ACCORDING TO ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS. UNCLASSIFIED

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR REGISTERED 4,170 REFUGEES, BUT LOCAL OFFICIALS IN GAMBELLA, A TOWN IN SOUTHWESTERN ETHIOPIA, SAY NUMBER HAS REACHED BETWEEN 10,000 AND 12,000 AND GROWING DAILY.

"ETHIOPIA HAS ASKED FOR HELP FROM UNITED NATIONS AND A TEAM OF INTERNATIONAL REFUGEE AGENCY REPRESENTATIVES IS HERE TO STUDY PROBLEM ...

"THE REFUGEES HAVE TOLD ETHIOPIAN AND U.N. OFFICIALS THAT SOME OF THEM HAVE COME FROM AS FAR WEST IN SOUTHERN SUDAN AS JUBA AND WAU AND AS FAR SOUTH AS NIMULE OR UGANDAN BORDER. IF THIS IS TRUE, IT WOULD SEEM TO INDICATE

THAT FIGHTING AND DISCORD HAVE SPREAD TO PARTS OF ALL THREE SOUTHERN SUDANESE PROVINCES, THE UPPER NILE, BAHR EL GHAZAL AND EQUATORIA, ALL AFFECTED BY SECESSIONIST MOVEMENT IN PAST. ABOUT FIVE MILLION OF SUDAN'S 18 MILLION PEOPLE LIVE IN SOUTH. REFUGEES HERE SAY THAT OTHER SUDANESE HAVE BEEN FLEEING TO UGANDA, ZAIRE AND CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC.

"A SUDANESE FOREIGN MINISTRY STATEMENT JULY 6 CATEGORICALLY DENIED THAT THERE WERE ANY SUDANESE REFUGEES' IN ETHIOPIA OR ELSEWHERE, ADDING 'ONLY A FEW PERSONS... CROSSED BORDER (INTO ETHIOPIA) AFTER REGRETTABLE AKOBO INCIDENT....'

" "SUDANESE REFUGEES LIVING IN GRASS HUTS AND OPEN FIELDS, NEAR HAMLET OF ETANG, BETWEEN GAMBELLA AND SUDANESE BORDER, TELL A DIFFERENT STORY...."

4. SOME REFUGEES, ACCORDING TO POST ARTICLE, SAID AS

MANY AS 150 ARAB SOLDIERS KILLED IN MARCH 3 CLASH IN AKOBO. "THE SUDANESE GOVERNMENT HAS SAID, HOWEVER, THAT ONLY NINE PERSONS WERE KILLED IN AKOBO INCIDENT,"

ARTICLE SAID. "IT HAS NOT SAID ANYTHING ABOUT CASUALTIES ON EITHER SIDE IN SUBSEQUENT CLASHES."

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5. POST CORRESPONDENTS INTERVIEWED REFUGEES IN ETANG AREA LAST WEEK. "ONE OF REFUGEES' KEY GRIEVANCES, AND THE EVENT APPARENTLY MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR RENEWED FIGHTING, WAS CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S DISMISSAL OF HALF OF 6,000 ANYANYA SOLDIERS INTEGRATED INTO SUDANESE ARMED FORCES AS PART OF ADDIS ABABA AGREEMENT," ARTICLE SAID.

6. ETHIOPIAN SOURCES IN GAMBELLA AND ETANG SAID ABOUT 600 ANYANYAS ARE TRAINING IN REGION TO FORM NEW ARMY, POST SAID.

7. ANYANYA INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT HAS NEW LEADER, POST SAID, IDENTIFIED BY REFUGEES ONLY BY NAME OF BINCHAS, WHO THEY SAID WAS FORMER OFFICER IN ANYANYA ARMY AND NOW OPERATING IN AKOBO REGION.
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